



**U.S. DEPARTMENT
of STATE**
Desktop and
Application
Virtualization
Case Study
December 2019

Background

Industry:

United States
Federal Government

Location:

Washington, D.C.

Key Challenges:

- Security compliance
- Workstation maintenance and manageability
- Hardware dependence
- Lack of reliability and convenience

Solution:

VMware Horizon Suite

Benefits:

- Improved security
- Improved endpoint maintenance and management
- Hardware independence
- Increased reliability and convenience

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U.S. Department of State: Leveraging Desktop and Application Virtualization

Created in 1789, the U.S. Department of State's (DoS) mission is to lead America's foreign policy through diplomacy, advocacy, and assistance by advancing the interests of the American people, their safety, and economic prosperity.

S/ES-ExecTech serves VIP DoS leadership including the Secretary of State, his principals and Under Secretary staff. With important duties such as supervising the U.S. Foreign Service, immigration policy, and conducting worldwide diplomacy, it is vital that they maximize the latest in digital technology to meet their extremely agile and demanding responsibilities.

Improvix Technologies, an IT integrator and service provider, has been tasked to ensure the DoS critical mission needs are met through the utilization of modern technology and innovation. DoS tasked Improvix to lead the charge in helping decrease their operational costs, improve manageability, and improve the end user experience leveraging innovation.

The Challenge

The Improvix Team, within the Department's S/ES-ExecTech office, is tasked with supporting thousands of endpoints spanning multiple classifications in office spaces that are not rated for open storage of classified information. These end points are owned and operated by VIP status clients who require ease of use, near zero down time, and OCONUS reliability.

To comply with security standards, users were required to remove the physical hard drive of their classified computer and lock it in a combination safe when not in use. This led to a plethora of workstation management challenges. These challenges included: infrequent classified network utilization, workstation unreliability, poor confidence, and routine downtime.

ExecTech also faced challenges with workstation maintenance and manageability at remote sites that were not fully staffed, such as the Secretary's traveling party. The dependence on physical hardware meant increased costs due to IT technicians having to travel to remote sites to remediate issues.

The Solution

Improvix identified the issues at hand and developed a solution leveraging the VMware Horizon Suite and transforming the way DoS runs their day-to-day operations.

The physical workstations were replaced with zero clients, which connected to VMware Horizon back end virtual workstations. Using a zero client in a solid state provided the following benefits to the government:

- Reduced the hardware footprint
- Allowed minimal static configuration
- Decreased maintenance costs and time
- Increased security and reduced downtime

The back end virtual workstations were centrally maintained, which reduced support efforts and kept a secure standard configuration across all virtual workstations.

Results & Benefits

In an organization such as S/ES, where their VIP customers require superior service levels, security, and reliability, it is essential to provide solutions to meet these standards.

With VMware's Horizon Suite, users no longer had to secure their hard drives in a safe, system administrators no longer had to track down missing, unsecure workstations, and cyber security was maintained by having standardized and secured endpoints. By managing their workstations centrally and virtually, they were able to decrease costs associated with resources. Additionally, all S/ES customers were now able to work remotely, from anywhere in the world, and have the same, consistent end-user experience, thereby maximizing productivity.

With the VMware Horizon Suite, our DoS clients are now able to operate with confidence in the field knowing that they can access their virtual desktops and files in a secure virtual manner.